



## *Article 2* *Planning Board Report*

2016 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
MARCH 23, 2016



# *Board & Staff Members*

## **Lexington Planning Board:**

Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti, Chair

Timothy Dunn, Vice Chair

Ginna Johnson, Clerk

Richard Canale

Charles Hornig

Michael Leon, Associate

## **Lexington Planning Department:**

Aaron Henry, Planning Director

David Kucharsky, Assistant Planning Director

David Fields, Planner

Lori Kaufman, Department Clerk



# *2015 - 2016 Initiatives*

- Residential Development Administration
  - 8 Approval Not Required Plans
  - 2 conventional subdivisions approvals
  - 3 Site Sensitive Development proposals
  - 2 Balanced Housing Developments
  - 5 private way adequacy determinations
- Commercial District Development Administration
  - Hartwell Avenue Special Permit
- Transportation-related Projects & Initiatives
  - Complete Streets Policy Development
  - Center Parking Management
  - Transportation Safety Group
- Zoning & Land Use Initiatives



## *The RPC Process*





# *The Residential Policy Committee*

## **The Planning Board asked:**

Is the trajectory of development in Lexington creating  
“The Lexington We Want?”

**To answer the question, the Planning Board formed  
the Residential Policy Ad-Hoc Committee (RPC)**

## **RPC Members:**

Ginna Johnson, Chair

Richard Canale, Vice Chair

Jeri Foutter

Tom Harden

Michael Leon

Joe Pato, Liaison, Board of Selectmen



# *RPC Charge*

An ad-hoc subcommittee of the Lexington Planning Board, the Residential Policy Committee (RPC) will assist the Board in its review and analysis of residential development and zoning by:

- Synthesizing public comments and facilitating the public process;
- Analyzing residential development trends in Lexington;
- Conducting research and analysis on residential policy precedents and proposals;
- Soliciting insight from the various Town Boards and Committees with an interest in residential policy; and
- Drafting a report to the Planning Board along with any potential regulations and Town Meeting articles that might be proposed.



# *The RPC Process*

## 20 RPC Meetings to Date

May 20, 2016 - Listening Session	November 10, 2015
June 9, 2015	November 24, 2015
June 23, 2015	December 10, 2015
July 7, 2015	January 4, 2016
July 17, 2015	January 12, 2016
July 21, 2015	January 20, 2016
August 4, 2015	January 21, 2016 - Public Workshop
August 25, 2015 - Housing Tour	January 27, 2016 - Public Info. Session
September 8, 2015	January 28, 2016
September 24, 2015 - Public Workshop	February 2, 2016
October 7, 2015	February 3, 2016 - Public Hearing
October 15, 2015	February 29, 2016
October 28, 2015	

## RPC Participants

Mike Alexander	Tina McBride
Elaine Ashton	Michael Martignetti
James Barr	Albert Montgomery
Joe Bur	Judy Moore
Adam Blauer	Amy Newmark
Ed Cain	Jane Pagett
Marcus Collins	Gerry Paul
Todd Cataldo	Bob Pressman
Bob Creech	Diane Pursley
Matt Daggett	Anne Richtarik
David Fairman	Carlos Sanrome
John Farrington	Beverly Seavey
Ed Feinman	Nancy Sofen
Wanda Feinman	Steve Stratford
Marilyn Fenollosa	Darbie Stokes
John Frey	Allan Sussman
Bob Heingartner	Eileen Sussman
Leonard Heinrich	Rebecca Taudvin
Bill Herring	Kay Tiffany
Joanne Kerwin	Douglas Touart
Ingrid Klimoff	Melinda Walker
Dan Krupka	Betsey Weiss
Marianne Lazarus	Sussana Whitman
Karen Longeteig	Sally Zimmerman



# *The RPC Process*

- ✓ Listening Session – May 2015
- ✓ Research and Data Gathering – July - Aug 2015
- ✓ Housing Tour – August 25, 2015 – – – – – ➔
- ✓ Draft Initiatives – September 2015
- ✓ Public Workshop – September 24, 2015 – – – – ➔
- ✓ Revise Draft Initiatives – Fall 2015
- ✓ Continue Community Outreach – Fall 2015
- ✓ Submit Article(s) for Town Warrant – Dec 2015
- ✓ Continue Community Outreach – Jan - Feb 2016
- **2016 Annual Town Meeting – Mar 2016**







# *Listening Session Comments May 20, 2015*

# 1

## **Town Character**

- Losing economic diversity; gave Town character
- Kids don't recognize their street
- Views are obliterated

# 2

## **Zoning**

- Balanced Housing doesn't work
- Need more restrictive zoning
- Need FAR, height restrictions

# 3

## **Diversity of Housing**

- Few options for Seniors to downsize
- "Average" houses being torn down
- Need more affordable housing

# 4

## **Trees**

- Trees soften urbanization
- Trees are sustainable
- Neighbors should be notified

# 5

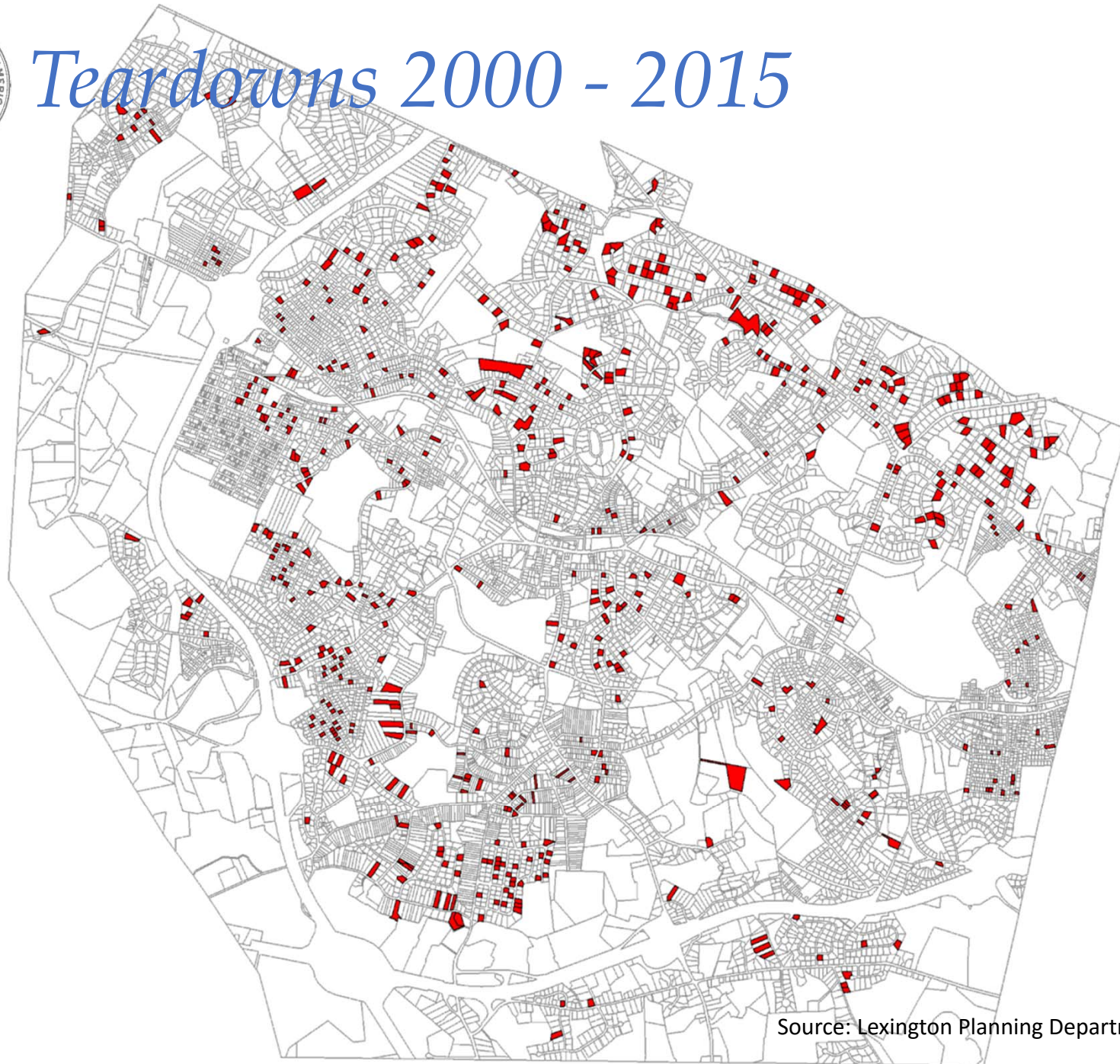
## **Policy**

- Housing should be more sustainable
- Need to be mindful of impact on Town budget
- Maintain public access to open space





# *Teardowns 2000 - 2015*



Source: Lexington Planning Department, 2015





# Teardowns

## Who is currently deciding Lexington's future?

- Building Permits pulled in 2014 total 97 new residential construction projects by 56 builders.

## Where do they come from?

- 20 of those builders have Lexington addresses (including PO boxes).
- Other builders are from: Arlington, Bedford, Berlin, Billerica, Boston, Burlington, Charleston, Chelmsford, Concord, Everett, Framingham, Hopkinton, Londonderry NH, Melrose, Milford NH, North Andover, North Reading, Pepperell, Quincy, Sudbury, Tewksbury, Waltham, Westford, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn.

Source: Town of Lexington Building Department; Grapevine Avenue, Google Maps





# *Tree Canopy Loss*

Since the Tree By-law was enacted in 2002, over **1,890 trees**, representing **16,416 diameter inches** have been removed from the setback areas of residential lots.

Source: Town of Lexington Annual Reports.





# *Housing in Lexington (2014):*

12,084 Housing Units in Lexington:

- 10,236 Single-Family Units (85%)
- 319 Two-Family Units (3%)
- 1,529 Multi-family Units or Apartments (12%)

Source: Lexington Housing Production Plan, 2014.





# *New Residential Construction*

What size houses are being built?

Year	# Single-Family New Construction	Average Living Area (SF)*
2010	14	3,986
2015	54	4,630

\*Living Area does not include garages or unfinished space.

How much do they cost?

**Single-family median home price has more than tripled since 1993:**

**1993 = \$291,000**

**2013 = \$810,000**

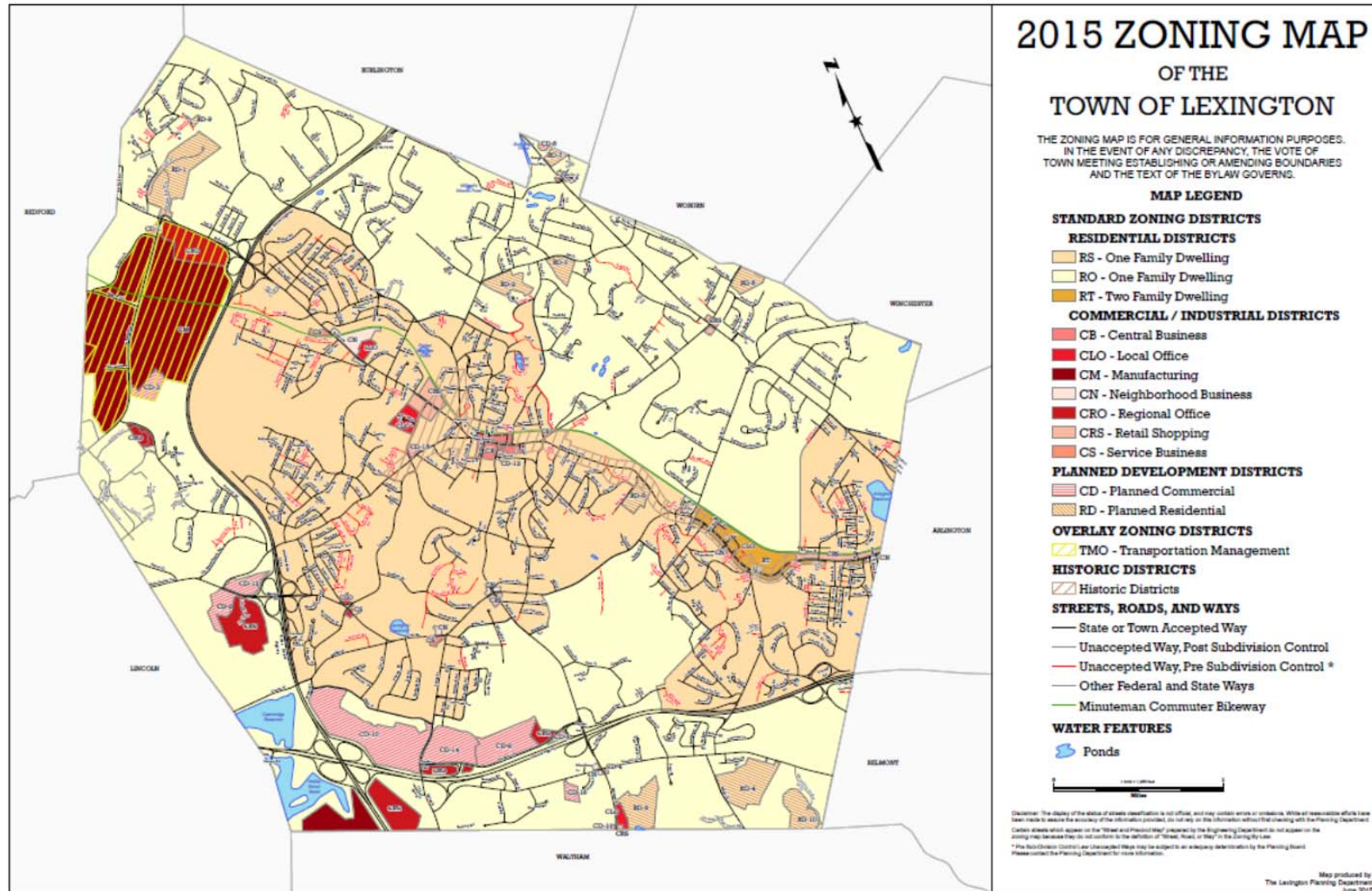
**2015 = \$1,000,000**

Sources: Lexington Housing Production Plan, Multiple Listing Service





# Lexington Zoning Primer





# Dimensional Controls: Table 2

1. Minimum Lot Area

2. Min. Frontage

3. Minimum Front,  
Side & Rear Yards  
(a.k.a. Setbacks  
or No Build Zones)

4. Floor Area Ratio  
5. Site Coverage

6. Maximum Height

4.4 TABLE 2, SCHEDULE OF DIMENSIONAL CONTROLS									
	Zoning Districts								
	RO	RS & RT	CN	CRS	CS	CB	CLO	CRO	CM
Minimum lot area	30,000 SF	15,500 SF	15,500 SF	15,500 SF	20,000 SF	NR	30,000 SF	5 AC	3 AC
Minimum lot frontage in feet	150	125	125	125	125	20	175	300	200
Minimum front yard in feet (a), (b), (h)	30	30	30	30	30	NR(c)	50	100	25
Minimum side yard in feet	15(d)	15(d)	20	20	15	NR	30	50	25(f)
Minimum rear yard in feet	15(d)	15(d)	20	20	20	10	30	50	25(f)
Minimum side and rear yard adjacent to, or front yard across the street from a residential district in feet	15	15	30	30	30	30	50	100	100(f)
Maximum floor area ratio (FAR)	NR(g)	NR(g)	0.20	0.20	0.20	2.0	0.25	0.15	0.35(f)
Maximum site coverage	15%(e)	15%(e)	20%	25%	25%	NR	20%	25%	NR
Institutional buildings, maximum height:									
In stories:	2.5	2.5	3	3	3	2	3	3	NR
In feet:	40	40	45	45	45	30	45	45	65(f)
Other buildings, maximum height:									
In stories:	2.5	2.5	1	2	2	2	2	3	NR
In feet:	40	40	15	25	25	25	30	45	65(f)

As used in the Schedule of Dimensional Controls, symbol "NR" means no requirements, "AC" means acres, "SF" means square feet, and "feet" means linear feet.





# *Yards (a.k.a. Setbacks)*

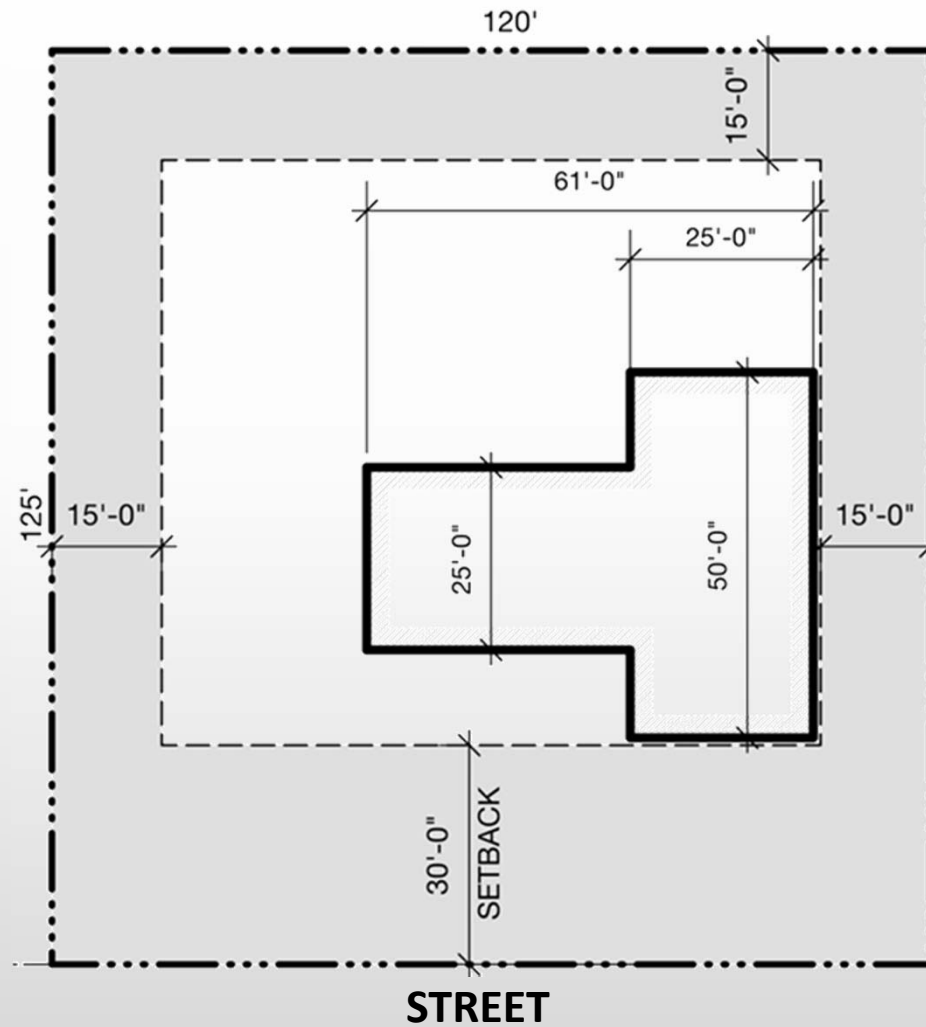
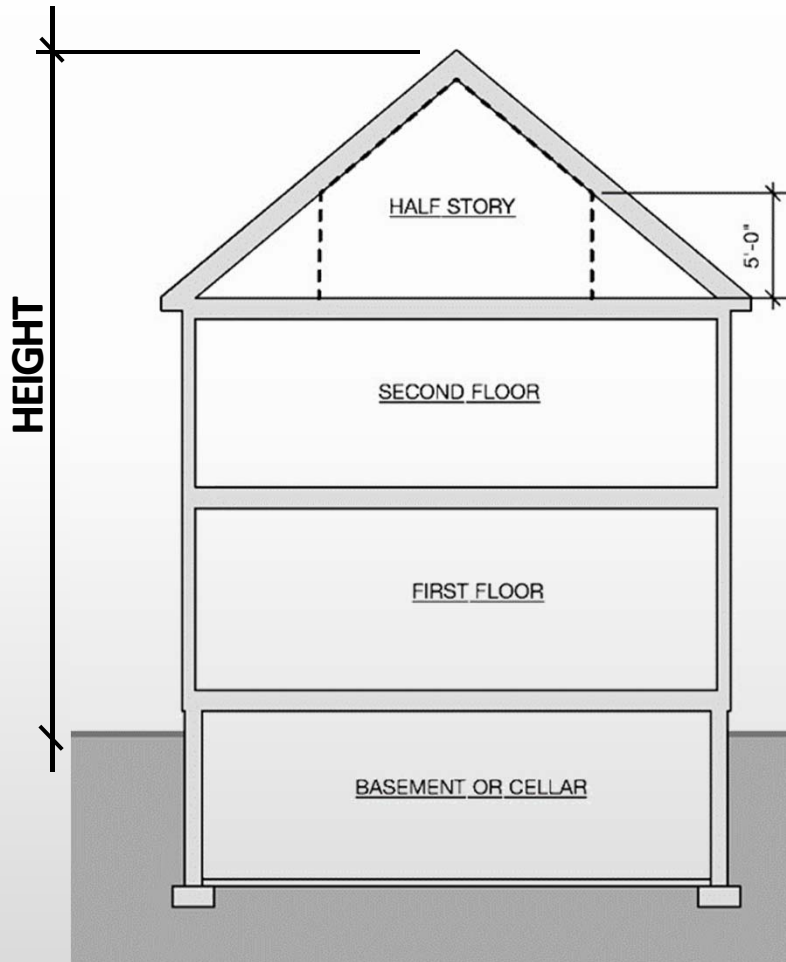




Diagram illustrating the layout of a rectangular building with a central courtyard. The building is 50' wide and 100' deep. The courtyard is 32'-0" wide and 30'-0" deep. The building has a 7'-6" wide side wall and a 15'-0" wide end wall. The building is situated on a lot with a street frontage of 25'-0".



# Building Height



**Height** is measured from natural grade prior to disturbance for construction to the top of the structure.

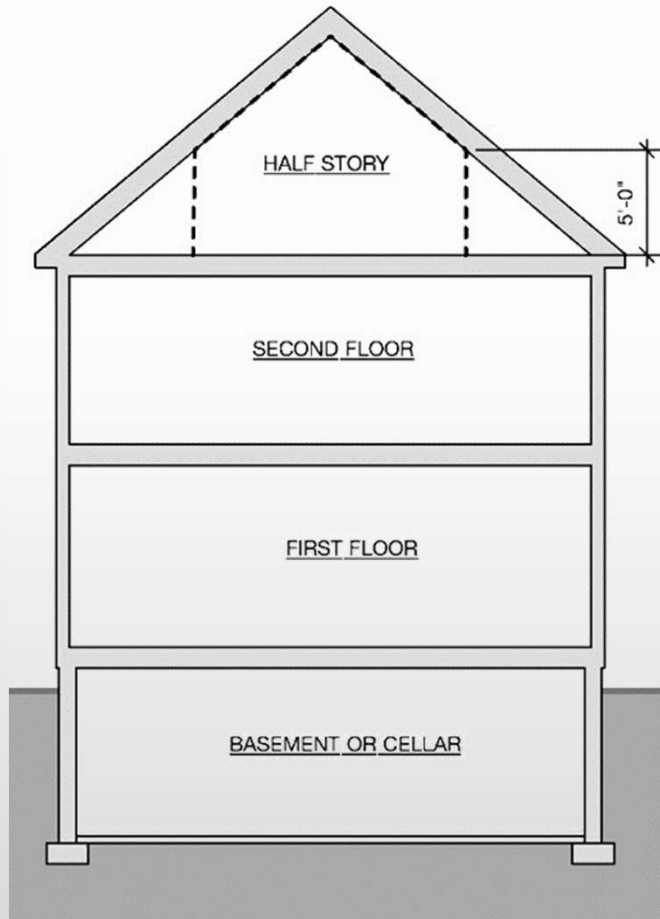
## ***Height, Building:***

The vertical distance between the lower elevation and the upper elevation, as described below.

- The lower elevation shall be the natural grade of the land at the point of measurement prior to disturbance for construction. The elevation of the natural grade prior to disturbance for construction shall be certified by a registered land surveyor, or may be such elevation as the Building Commissioner may determine from Town maps or records. In a case where the finished grade is lower than the natural grade, the finished grade shall be the lower elevation.
- The upper elevation shall be the highest point of any ridge, gable, other roof surface, or parapet.



# Gross Floor Area (GFA)



- **Gross Floor Area (SF)** is the sum of the floor areas on each level.
- **Gross floor area:**
  - The sum, in square feet, of the horizontal areas of all stories of a building or several buildings on the same lot measured from the exterior face of exterior walls, or from the center line of a party wall separating two buildings. Gross floor area shall also include garages, basements, cellars, porches and half stories, but shall exclude crawl spaces, attics, and decks. Where the text of this bylaw refers to floor area, the term shall mean gross floor area unless the term net floor area is used.
- **Gross Floor Area (SF) divided by Lot Size (SF) = Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**



## *Gross Floor Area includes Basements*





*Gross Floor Area includes half stories  
(finished attics)*







# How does Lexington compare?

	Municipality		Lexington	Burlington/ not inc. garden apts. or continuing care		Woburn			Winchester	Arlington/ there are others		Belmont / there are others		Waltham/ there are others	Lincoln				Concord				Bedford
Zoning Dimension Controls																							
Name of Residential District	RO	RS & RT	RO	R-1	RDA	RDB	RDC	RG	R0	SR-A	SR-B	RA-1	RA-2	R-1	AA	A	B	C	R	A	B	C	
Minimum Lot Area (SF)	30,000	15,500	20,000	12,000	20,000	10,000	15,000	6,500	9,000	25,000	12,000	20,000	15,000	80,000	80,000	40,000	20,000	10,000	60,000	40,000	30,000	25,000	
Minimum Frontage (FT)	150	125	100	100	100	80	100	65	75	125	90	100	80	120	200	150	125	80	200	150	125	115	
Setback, Front (FT)	30	30	25	25	35	25	35	20	25	30	25	40	40	50	40	40	20	20	35	35	35	35	
Setback, Side (FT)	15	15	15	12	20	15	20	10	10	15	10	20	20	50	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	
Setback, Rear (FT)	15	15	15	30	20	15	20	10	20	40	30	40	40	50	30*	30*	30*	30*	30	30	30	30	
Max. Height of Structures (FT)/ Stories	40/ 2.5	40/ 2.5	30	35/ 2.5	40/2.5	40/2.5	40/ 2.5	40/2.5	35/2.5	36/2.5	36/2.5	35/ 2.5	35/2.5	36/2.5	35	35	35	35	37	37	37	37	
Floor Area Ratio	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Landscaped Usable Open Space <sup>1</sup>	x	x	x	50%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Building Ground Coverage <sup>2</sup>	x	x	x	25%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Min. % Open Area <sup>3</sup>	x	x	x	x	75%	70%	70%	70%	x	50%	50%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Lot Coverage Maximum Percent	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	35%	20%	25%	20%	20%	25%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Open Space Minimum/ Percent of Gross Floor Area--Landscaped	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Open Space Minimum/ Percent of Gross Floor Area--Usable	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	30%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Maximum size of structure	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	6500	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

1. Woburn: USABLE OPEN SPACE: Space in a yard that is unoccupied by buildings, and not devoted to service driveways, off-street loading or parking spaces and ways.

2. Woburn: BUILDING GROUND COVERAGE: The percentage of total lot area covered by buildings.

3. Winchester: Min. % Open Space: OPEN AREA, PERCENTAGE. That percentage of the lot area which is not occupied by any structure.

4. Arlington: Lot Coverage Maximum Percent

5. Arlington: Open Space, Landscaped: Open space designed and developed for pleasant appearance in trees, shrubs, ground covers and grass, including other landscaped elements such as natural features of the site, walks and terraces, and also including open areas accessible to and developed for the use of the occupants of the building located upon a roof not more than 10 feet above the level of the lowest story used for dwelling purposes

6. Arlington: Open Space, Usable: The part or parts of a lot designed and developed for outdoor use by the recreation including swimming pools, tennis courts or similar facilities, for garden or for household occupants of the lot for service activities such as clothes drying; which space is at least 75 percent open to the sky, free of automotive traffic and parking, and readily accessible by all those for whom it is required. Such space may include open area accessible to and developed for the use of the occupants of the building, and located upon a roof not more than 10 feet above the level of the lowest story used for dwelling purposes. Open space shall be deemed usable only if: (1) at least 75 percent of the area has a grade of less than eight (8) percent and (2) no horizontal dimension is less than 25 feet.

- Communities with larger rear setbacks than Lexington (15') for comparable sized lots: Woburn (30'), Winchester (20'), Arlington (20'), Belmont (30' & 40'), Waltham (40'), Lincoln (50'), Bedford (30')...and Concord (30').
- Burlington has the same rear setback (15') for a 20,000 SF lot size.



## *What are other communities doing about residential redevelopment?*

Town	Floor Area Ratio (Max. Gross Floor Area)	Site Plan Review
<b>Brookline</b>	Yes, varies for each district.	Yes, for Special Permit review.
<b>Chelmsford</b>	No	Yes, site plan approval for single-family homes over 4,000 gross square feet.
<b>Lincoln</b>	No	Yes, site plan review if proposed plan is 4,000 SF or 8% of the lot area or GFA is equal to or exceeds 6,500 SF.
<b>Newton</b>	Yes, varies for each district.	Yes, for Special Permit review (granted if proposal consistent with neighborhood).
<b>Wellesley</b>	No	Yes, Large Home Review thresholds are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3,600 SF* on 10,000 SF lots</li><li>• 4,300 SF* on 15,000 SF lots</li><li>• 5,900 SF* on 20,000 SF lots</li><li>• 7,200 SF* on 30 and 40,000 SF lots</li></ul> *Total Living Area Plus Garage Space

Source: Concord Mansionization Study, 2015





# Understanding Trends

## Conclusions:

- Teardowns are impacting neighborhoods across Town and the trend is accelerating.
- Abutters are impacted by loss of views, loss of tree canopy and loss of sunlight, and loss of privacy.
- Housing in Lexington is getting significantly bigger and more expensive. Housing options are becoming fewer. Lexington's population is becoming stratified by age and income.
- *The trajectory of residential redevelopment in Lexington is not creating "The Lexington We Want."*



# *Town Vision Statements*

## *Comprehensive Plan: The Lexington We Want, 2002*

*Goals addressing residential redevelopment:*

### **Land Use:**

- Create housing to support the social and economic diversity of Lexington.
- Protect and promote the character and beauty of the community.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources:**

- Reduce encroachment on natural resources
- Address pollution and other natural resource concerns
- Celebrate the Town's place in National History
- Strengthen zoning incentives and controls and further refine demolition controls to better protect and preserve neighborhood character, topographic features and archeological resources.

### **Housing:**

- Consider provisions to control the adverse effects of out-of-scale houses, where appropriate.
- Broaden opportunities for producing housing...that is relatively affordable and that is likely to serve other diversity concerns, such as serving small households.
- Protect existing housing that is important for the maintenance of diversity.
- Assure that new development doesn't indirectly exacerbate the housing problem.



# *Town Vision Statements*

## *The Lexington 20/20 Vision Statement of Goals, 2003*

*Goals addressing residential redevelopment:*

### **THEME I: Promote and Strengthen Community Character**

- Design and promote community gathering places and events.
- Develop criteria and mechanisms for preserving the physical character of residential neighborhoods.
- Provide increased housing options to promote diversity of income and age.
- Create strong incentives to maintain and expand affordable housing.



# *Town Vision Statements*

## *Lexington Housing Production Plan, 2014*

### **Goals:**

- Maintain Lexington's Subsidized Housing Inventory above 10% through 2020 and beyond.
- Provide more housing options for Lexington's low-income households earning less than 80% of area median income.
- Provide housing options for Lexington middle-income households earning 80% to 120% of area median income.
- Provide housing options tailored to the needs of seniors and those with disabilities.
- Plan affordable housing to incorporate sustainable building practices and to support Lexington's economic goals
- Coordinate Lexington's affordable housing development with regional housing strategies.



# Residential Policy Article Goals

## **1** Preserve Lexington's Town Character and Unique Neighborhoods

*Steward Lexington's unique role in American history, protect its New England regional character and scale, and preserve its unique neighborhoods.*

## **3** Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types

*Provide increased housing options to promote diversity of income and age. Create strong incentives to maintain and expand affordable housing.*



## **2** Reduce the Adverse Impacts of Redevelopment

*Recalibrate our zoning to reduce the adverse impacts of redevelopment on abutters and neighborhoods including loss of views, tree canopy, sunlight, and privacy.*



# *Residential Policy Article Goals*

## **1** Preserve Lexington's Town Character and Unique Neighborhoods

**Article 29 - Neighborhood Conservation Districts**

## **3** Encourage a Diversity of Housing Types

**Article 40 - Accessory Apartments**

**Article 42 - Two-Family Dwellings**



## **2** Reduce the Adverse Impacts of Redevelopment

**Article 39 – Maximum Height of Structures Near Lot Lines**

**Article 41 - Gross Floor Area**